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Food Day
CANADA

ISSUE 22 Summer 2016

CAD/US \$6.95 



FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE TO *read*, LOVE TO *eat*, AND LOVE TO *travel*

*...Every one of the
300-odd plantings
at Babylonstoren is edible ...*



SOUTH AFRICA

Stellenbosch *by* ANNE DESBRISAY *and the Cape* Winelands



South Africa

WHERE ON EARTH

I had done a modicum of homework for my maiden *braai*. At least enough to know the word is pronounced ‘bry’ not ‘bray;’ that I should bring my own contribution to the coals; and that if I wanted to fit in, it shouldn’t be veggie kabobs.»

THIS PHOTO Wildlife sanctuary Villiera.



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD
CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Gundula at Babylonstoren;
Babylonstoren; Ben Molberg
Middelvlei; Eikenboom Slagtery;
Apricot Chutney recipe;
Butcher Nic Van Rensburg;
Middelvlei chef; Schoon De
Companje; Middelvlei worker.

◀ **AFRIKAANS FOR BARBECUE, A BRAAI IS** integral to South African culture — an outdoor feast centred around wood-fired coals.

It's an event best approached hungry and by meat lovers, according to my niece Claire, who lives in Cape Town. I was visiting her last February, and she was helping me prepare for the Stellenbosch *braai*. It was to be my first night in Cape wine country and I wanted to get it right. "You can't *braai* without beer," was the first bit of intelligence she gave. I made a note. The second was this: "if you bring chicken to a *braai* you're considered a vegetarian".

So I brought *boerewors*. I had been introduced to this celebrated spiced sausage from Hanli Fouri, of Bites & Sites Food Tours. We were on a delicious amble together around Stellenbosch, 50 kilometres due east from Cape Town, a leafy university town of narrow streets lined with mighty oaks and sturdy white buildings. With the distinction of being the second oldest European settlement in South Africa, there is deep history to explore here — just wander up and down Dorp Street to feel it or pop into the trading post called *Oom Samie se Winke*, Uncle Samie's Store.

A day sampling the town's best breads, ice cream, tea rooms and wine bars ended on

Pleinstreet in front of the oldest surviving butchery in Stellenbosch. And probably, according to Fouri, the oldest in all of South Africa. The Eikenboom Slagtery has been operating out of the same whitewashed building since 1879. Butcher Nic van Rensburg offered generous samples of his

magnificent biltong, a South African beef snack (salted, spiced, pickled, dried and highly munchable) with recipe roots that are centuries old.

I brought the sausages to the *braai*, and a bag of biltong too, keen that my meaty contributions pass muster. In addition to my *boerewors*, on





the grill that afternoon were beef rump steaks, kudu sirloin, pork ribs, herbed chicken, lamb chops and *sosaties* (mutton skewers in a sweet Cape Malay curry marinade), *braai broodjie* (grilled sandwiches filled with cheese, tomato and onion and tied up with string), hake fish and *roosterkoek*, bread rolls

and next to a vintage conservatory filled with plants that don't much like the extremes of Cape weather and winds: ginger, cardamom, dragonfruit, pineapples, baobab and vanilla.

Both Babylonstoren restaurants practice a 'garden-to-plate' philosophy, picking and serving the food they grow.

cooked over the coals on a stick, the hole filled in with bits of sausage. No greens on the buffet table, though there was a mealie bake, a sweet corn pudding, discovered at the end of the line.



This somehow tastes even better when you've first examined the eight acres of cultivated fruits and vegetables with someone who knows them well. My guide was Gundula. "This one's my favourite" was her oft-repeated mantra as she pointed out the buchu plant (once so prized it was

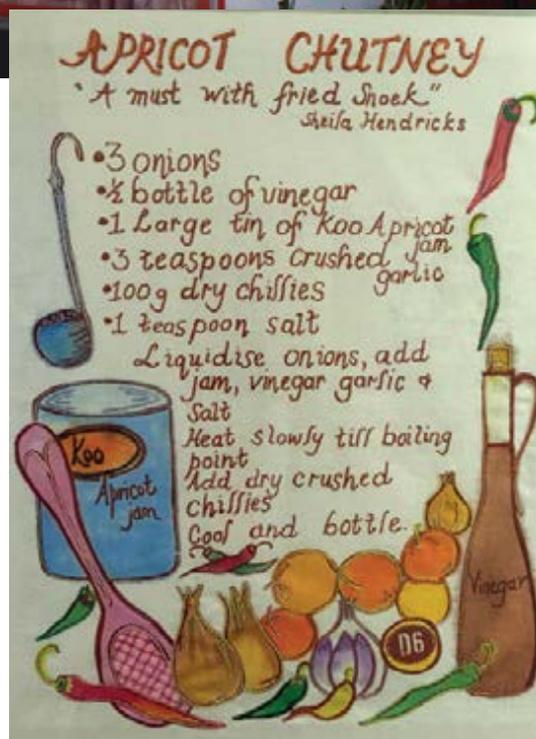
The next day I managed a restorative lunch at Babylonstoren, a most remarkable farm sitting pretty in the Drakenstein Valley between Franschoek and Paarl.

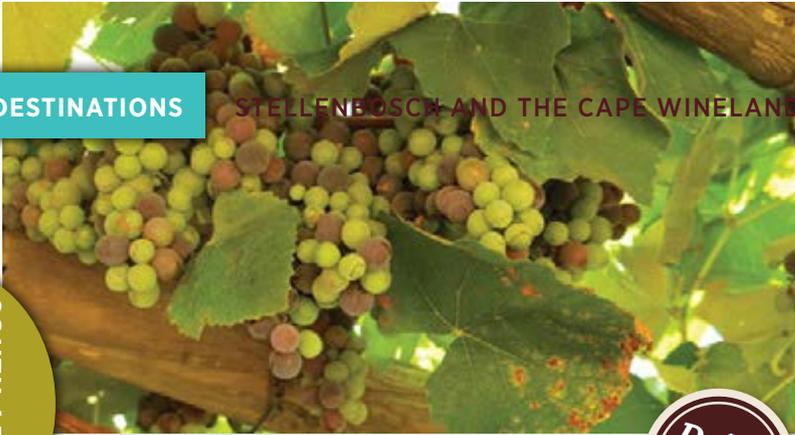
Established in 1690 as a grain farm, today's Babylonstoren is a tidy Cape Dutch homestead with whitewashed stone walls, thatched roof and ornate gables, now in its fourth century of service. It is also a luxury working-guest farm with a highly regarded winery and a restaurant called Babel. (Book a table. I didn't; I hope there's a next time.)

I had a perfectly lovely leafy lunch, post garden tour, in the more casual Greenhouse restaurant beneath the branches of oak trees

bartered for sheep), as she plucked me an edible nymphae lily, or introduced me to the ancient weeping mulberry tree ("the Mother of the garden").

Every one of the 300-odd plantings at Babylonstoren is edible. "We are simply not allowed to plant anything that can't be consumed," Gundula explained. I challenged this when we came to an expanse of grass. "Lie down," she suggested. "Stick your nose in this lawn." And so I did and it smelled... odd... for grass. The turf is entirely chamomile. »





BABYLONSTOREN, a luxury working guest farm with good restaurants and an array of elegant, balanced, natural wines. Loved the Nebukadnesar, a Bordeaux blend. www.babylonstoren.com

GLENELLY WINE ESTATE Poised on the slopes of Simonsberg Mountain, a modern wine estate owned by the ninety-one year old May-Eliane de Lencquesaing, thousands of kilometres from her Bordeaux base. From one of the great wine families of the world, famous for the Pauillac winery Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande, the Glenelly flagship wine is named in her honour, the elegant 'Lady May.' www.glenellyestate.com

MIDDELVLEI, a remarkably hospitable, family-friendly winery, with wine blending classes, farm animals, picnic grounds, friendly dogs and delicious grilled meats, cheese and charcuterie at Boerebraai restaurant. www.middelvlei.co.za

REMHOOGTE WINE ESTATE Small, artisan wine estate, with the Simonsberg Mountains and a few zebras the backdrop, the grapes are hand harvested, the ferment is wild and the workers are all on-estate. Particularly notable, the flagship red, Sir Thomas Cullinan, named for the great great grandfather of the brothers who run Remhoogte. www.remhoogte.co.za

VILLIERA WINES Family winery best known for its environmentally-responsibly-produced Cap Classique sparklers, its greening projects, its wildlife sanctuary with game drives, and its community philanthropy. Don't miss the sparkling wine and nougat pairing in the garden. www.villiera.com

Eat

TOKARA On the crest of the Helshoogte Pass with marvellous vistas and excellent cellar, Chef Richard Carstens and winemaker Miles Mossop work gastronomic magic. www.tokara.co.za

BABEL and **THE GREENHOUSE**, both at Babylonstoren, Stellenbosch. www.babylonstoren.com

SCHOON DE COMPANJE, for a range of artisan goods found on the corner of Bird & Church streets, Stellenbosch. www.decompanje.co.za

Do

CAPE FOOD & WINE TOURS with winemaker Charlene Pepler showcases the Cape's finest artisan producers and tailors tours to suit needs. www.capefoodwine.com

BITES & SITES CULTURAL FOOD TOURS with Hanli Fouri. www.bitesandsites.co.za



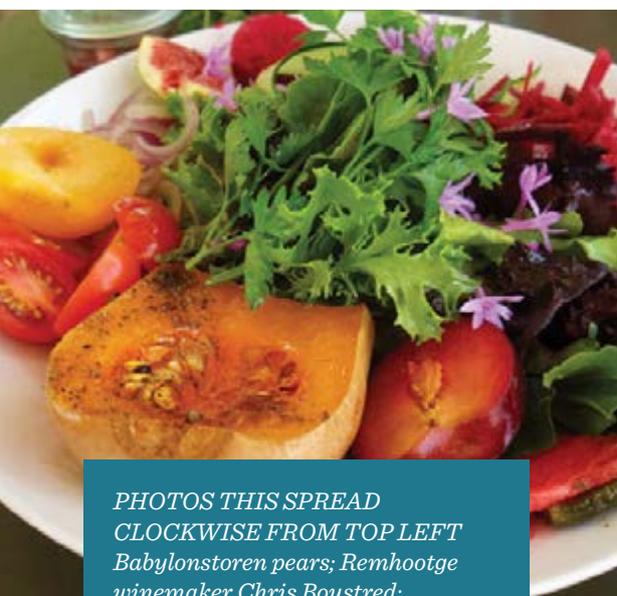
«Herbs here are all culinary or medicinal. Pathways are covered with peach pits. The garden maze is created with giant prickly pear. Gravity works water into the gardens, flowing through planted ponds that feed fish. There are rice paddies, and there are vineyards.

After lunch I was directed to Babylonstoren's modern tasting room for samples of the vibrant Chardonnay, and the estate's 2013 flagship Bordeaux blend called *Nebukadnesar*, named for the famous king of the Babylon, 6th century BCE. Each Babylonstoren bottle is marked with the flower, the bird and the pipe — representing the garden, nature and the farmer.

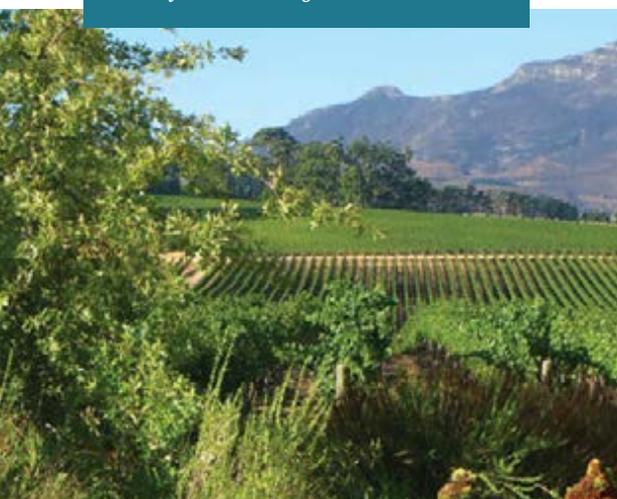
My final days in Stellenbosch were spent exploring a handful of the 150 or so wine farms and estates nestled in the valleys of the Cape Winelands. For help on that front, I turned to University of Stellenbosch graduate and winemaker, Charlene Pepler. (Also a biltong aficionado: "Air-dry the cured beef with the help of a fan!") Pepler led me to some of her favourite spots (read on) along with a few others we discovered on our own.

The most agonizing part of any trip home from wine country is deciding which bottles to bring home. In the end, Babylontoren's big red, Nebukadnesar, the elegant 'Lady May' from Glenelly Wine Estate, the two bottles I had blended myself at Middelvlei, and the Sir Cullinan from Remhoogte. Oh yes, and a bottle of Méthode Cap Classique sparkling wine from Villiera. For my Canadian *braai*. 

ANNE DESBRISAY is an award-winning Canadian food writer, restaurant critic, editor and culinary judge. Her latest book, *Ottawa Cooks*, will be released in September 2016.



PHOTOS THIS SPREAD
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Babylonstoren pears; Remhooftge
winemaker Chris Boustred;
Remhooftge; Salad at Babylonstoren;
View from Glenelly.



MAKES 15-20

Koeksister

SOUTH AFRICA

THE WORD COMES from the Dutch *koek* (cake) and *sissen* (sizzle), a syrup-saturated doughnut sometimes plaited, sometimes twisted, and sometimes egg-shaped balls, brightened with coconut. At the cafe in the District Six Museum in Cape Town, they sell both the Dutch version of the koeksister and the Malay version, written 'koe'siste' or koesiester.

Though each is wildly sweet, I'm sold on the spicier Malay koe'siste, with its coconut crunch. This recipe is from Doreen Hanning (ex-resident of District Six) through the Huis Kombus food and memory project of the District Six Museum.

Cake Flour 4 cups
Ground Ginger 2 tsp
Ground Cinnamon 2 tsp
Fine Dried Naartjie Peel 1 tsp (optional)
Ground Aniseed 2 tsp
Dried Yeast 1 package (50 g)
Milk ½ cup
Warm Water ½ cup
Melted Butter ¼ cup
Sunflower Oil 1 Tbs
Salt 1 tsp
Sugar 2 Tbs
Egg 1 large
Oil for deep frying, 750 ml

Sugar Syrup

Sugar 1 cup
Water 1 cup
Rose Water 1 tsp, optional
Coconut Flakes 150 g, optional

- 1 SIFT** together flour and all dry ground spices. Add yeast, milk and warm water.
- 2 IN** a second bowl, combine melted butter, sunflower oil, salt and sugar.
- 3 COMBINE** wet mixture into dry mixture. Beat egg and add to mixture.
- 4 KNEAD** for about 15 minutes, until dough is elastic.
- 5 PUT** dough into a large bowl and cover with a towel or cling wrap. Leave to rise in a warm spot until doubled in size, about 10-15 minutes.
- 6 ONCE** risen, knead a bit more, then roll dough and cut into rounds. Set aside to rise again.
- 7 IN** heavy saucepan, heat oil for frying.

Stretch each ball of dough lightly, to form an oval shape, and fry for 5 minutes per side until golden brown. Drain.

- 8 IN** a second heavy saucepan combine sugar and water and bring to a boil, reducing heat and stirring until sugar is dissolved and syrup is clear and slightly sticky.
- 9 CAREFULLY** boil koeksisters, a few at a time, in sugar syrup, turning to coat.
- 10 REMOVE**, drain and if desired, roll in coconut sprinkled with rose water. Serve with tea or coffee.

